

The Liturgical Movement: in and for America

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A FEATURE of Catholicism that becomes constantly more conspicuous in our day is that known as the Liturgical Movement, a widespread and more or less organized effort to bring about a better understanding by all of the public worship of the Church with a view towards more active and complete participation therein by the entire body of the laity. That the movement should have thus far spread but slowly in the United States is not surprising, immersed as the too-few American priests are in the exactions and distractions of a complicated ministry. What is somewhat surprising is the tardiness with which the movement is making its way into the religion curricula of Catholic colleges and universities—a survey of the printed catalogues brings out the fact that an insignificant number of these institutions have as yet glimpsed the magnitude or dynamism of the ideas underlying the liturgical movement. How matters stand in the diocesan and regular seminaries is not so readily ascertained, since printed outlines of their courses are not at hand. This general reserve is, I believe, attributable to two causes: first, our traditional chariness of anything ecclesiastical savoring of novelty; and second, the somewhat incomplete presentation of the movement to Americans. By this I mean endeavoring to impose the movement on American Catholicism without laboring long enough and hard enough to bring to the general Catholic consciousness a knowledge of the doctrine on which the whole movement rests, that of the mystical body of Christ.

I

The common duty of fidelity to the tenets and norms of our fathers is so ingrained in us that Catholics, the clergy even more than the laity, are almost inevitably suspicious

and resentful in the face of any religious novelty. But given a moment's reflection they will readily concede that in every age—and especially at the turning points of history—the Church has shaped and fashioned its appeal to accord with the pressing needs of the day. The Holy Spirit, the Divine Guide of the Church, is Himself the Householder of the parable, “who bringeth forth out of His treasure new things and old” (St. Matt. xiii, 52). To meet the needs of the disruptive twentieth century the Holy Spirit has brought forth something very, very old indeed, something that had slumbered in the general Christian consciousness for centuries, the doctrine of the mystical body.

Let one briefly indicate what a thorough-going reorientation in religious thought this has meant. In the wide field of positive theology, the most fruitful perhaps of modern ecclesiastical studies, the greatest contributions have revived in their ancient splendor the notions of the mystical body. Reference is made in first instance to the work of Father Lebreton on the Trinity,¹ and those classical Pauline studies of Father Prat,² and the more popular studies of Fathers Duperray,³ and Bover.⁴

In the range of dogmatic theology the greatest achievement of our age was Father de la Taille's focusing the luminous truths of the mystical body on the mystery of the Eucharist.⁵ The same trend in modern theological scholarship discloses itself in the writings of Father Kramp,⁶ and Father Lepin,⁷ who in their respective researches on the Eucharist gives the same importance to the truths of the mystical body. In the older schoolroom manuals of theology these ideas received small and passing notice, but with the appearance of the manuals of today how different is the case. Witness the late Father Dieckmann's *De Ecclesia*,⁸ or Father Galtier's *De Incarnatione ac Redemptione*.⁹ Finally we have a full-length formal treatise on the whole of theology in the frame-work of the mystical body,¹⁰ and the detailed survey of these sublime and consoling truths in their relationship to holy Mass from the layman's point of view.¹¹

In the Papal encyclicals addressed to the whole flock of Peter the same note has been conspicuously struck more than once. To go no farther back than the years of Pius XI, let one recall the “Quas primas” of 1925, by which the Feast of the Kingship of Christ was established; the glowing little

treatise on the mystical body in "Miserentissimus Redemptor" of 1928, when the Feast of the Sacred Heart was given new rank and dignity; or the latest "Caritate Christi" of the present year, a document which can only be fully understood in the light of the Christian's membership in the mystical body.

But theological research-monographs or school-room manuals, and even the Papal encyclicals, are meant in first instance for the clergy and do not reach down to the multitude of the Faithful. Are the notions of the mystical body really reaching the latter, and how? This is rapidly being done through popular ascetical authors, and will be continued through revisions of the penny catechisms now being undertaken. Apart from those who are dealing primarily with apologetics, like Father M. J. Scott, S.J., practically every ascetical writer now enjoying a wide vogue is a mouth-piece of the doctrines of the mystical body. Here let the primacy of mention go to the late Abbot Columba Marmion, O.S.B., whose early works sent a thrill through the world and have passed into the ascetical literature of all languages.¹² That indefatigable epitomist, Abbé A. Tanquerey, has in this matter made a very significant contribution in a little work which constantly reaches new circles.¹³ An enviable place of honor in this roll belongs to Father Raoul Plus, S.J., who year for year enriches modern thought with ascetical applications of the doctrines of the mystical body.¹⁴ If all of these works, as well as those of the leaders of present-day Catholic thought in Germany (Guardini,¹⁶ Herwegen¹⁷) come to us in translations, there are also notable works in our own tongue. A new star of the first magnitude was charted on the appearance of the books of Father Steuart, S.J., books, which, one ventures to predict, will soon enjoy multiple translation.¹⁸ Here, too, as in so many other fields we are indebted to Father Martindale.¹⁹ The breaking of these sublime truths into fragments for the children has been the task of, among others, Mother M. Ellerker, T.O.S.D.²⁰ and Father W. Roche, S.J.²¹

The revision of school catechisms in order to give prominence to the subject of the mystical body naturally goes forward more slowly. In Germany as early as 1925 the late Dr. Stephan outlined valuable hints for such a catechism in his booklet *Tut dies, oder macht was ihr wollt* and later pri-

vately printed his catechism for high school and adult use under the title *Die Lehre Jesu Christi*.²² Of an English diocese we have recently read of such a revision being ordered. In this connection it is very significant to recall statements that were made in conversation by Mr. Francis J. Sheed while in America last year. Mr. Sheed, Master of the Catholic Evidence Guild, said the Guild was resolved to scrap its apologetic weapons, forged so carefully and sharpened on a thousand public "pitches" these many years, and to reorganize on the basis of the positive presentation of Catholicism. Not "Why a Catholic?" but "What is a *Christian*?" is to be the message. In France a special supplement to the catechism is already in use under the significant title *Le Christ total*.²³ Some years ago it seemed that the United States was approaching some such undertaking, since the teaching of liturgy was engaging a good deal of attention at the School of Education of the Catholic University, but nothing very tangible has as yet resulted.²⁴

Incomplete as is this documentation, and purposely almost limited to works which have appeared in an English translation, it must make it evident that the Church of today appeals to its children principally through the doctrine called the mystical body of Christ.

II

What are the basic notions of this doctrine? They are two: first, that every Christian in virtue of Baptism becomes vitally attached to Christ; second, that every Christian (in the state of grace) is permanently a living temple of the Godhead in such an intimate way that he is caught up and associated with the actual life of God Himself. This extension of Christ in His brethren, this necessary complement of Christ, without which He Himself would be imperfect, is the vast living organism called now the Church, now the communion of saints, now the mystical body of Christ. This indwelling of the Holy Spirit, an actual sharing in the Divine life, is the root notion of grace, merit, sanctification, salvation. Let us engage the matter in greater detail.

The expressions coined by St. Paul to express this *vital* union with Christ, to live with (Rom. vi, 8), to bring to life with (Ephes. ii, 5, Col. ii, 13), to be united with His life

(Rom. vi, 11), to be conincorporate with Him (Ephes. iii, 6), to be built together with Him (Ephes. ii, 22), to be His co-partner (Ephes. iii, 6), to sit with Him in the heavenly places, (Ephes. i, 20)—all these terms (and many others could be adduced), express a most profound change, a new kind of life, life from a new vital principle, a new order of existence, an elevation of nature that reaches the deepest roots of being. This change is called by Paul the sonship of adoption: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son . . . that we might enter upon our adoption as sons. . . . Wherefore thou art no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir also by the act of God" (Gal. iv, 4-7). Man thus becomes by an act of God what Christ was by nature, a son or daughter, and hence a brother or sister of Jesus Christ. It is in a very real sense the extension to the whole of regenerated humanity of the mystery of the Incarnation, God united to man. Human nature is thus even said by St. Peter to be made a sharer of the Divine nature: "by whom (Christ) He (God) hath bestowed upon us the precious and very great promises, so that in consequence of these ye may be made partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i, 4).

Adoption as a legal concept among men means no more than the free acceptance of a stranger into a family with the legal (not blood) rights and privileges of a child: a legal declaration that a stranger shall rank as a blood relation. But adoption into the family of God implies a tremendous vital change, just as real and far more comprehensive than as if a sculptor could breathe life into a finished statue and take this new living creature for his son.

This complexus of all baptized persons with Christ and in Christ, "living no longer themselves, but Christ living in them" (Gal. ii, 29), constitutes the mystical body of Christ. "And our incorporation into the mystical body," says Father Prat,²⁵ "is a real creation, the production of a new being, subject to new rights, and consequently to new duties." Among the new rights consequent upon adoption is that called by Paul "walking in newness of life" (Rom. vi, 4), that of performing *supernatural* actions, actions that *per se* only God can perform. The new relation of sonship gives the Christian's actions in due proportion that same value as had the actions of His Son-by-nature, Christ, and evokes that special

benevolence of parenthood, because they are the actions of a son or daughter.

Viewed from the side of Christ, under whose headship all things are thus incorporated, these doctrines open up limitless vistas of glorious truths. But in this hasty sketch let us pass rather to the viewpoint of the individual Christian, the wild olive of Paul's phrase now engrafted upon the stem and sharing its life (Rom. xi, 17). The Apostle exhausts himself in extolling in general and in detail the "unsearchable riches" (Ephes. ii, 7) we possess in Christ by virtue of our incorporation, but the greatest of them is the constant indwelling—"being at home"—in us of the Holy Trinity. "If any man love Me, My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him" (St. John xiv, 23): and "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who hath been given to us" (Rom. v, 5). Father Steuart expresses it:²⁶

Therefore the Three divine Persons, inhabit, make their home, in our souls. If they *are*, they *act* there. Therefore the soul that is in grace is the theatre of that infinite, all-embracing act which is the generation of the Son by the Father and the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Thus to be united with God means to be caught up into the eternal Act of God's existence to be in some unimaginable way concerned in the generation and procession, which is His existence. No wonder that my soul . . . is an object of beauty in the sight of Heaven: no wonder that from it there is communicated the Goodness and the Power of God to all the world around me: for it means that God Himself, the Blessed Trinity, is alive in me in the ceaseless activity of infinite power and wisdom and love.

The sublime realities considered in the foregoing paragraphs are but a part of the whole truth. They deal merely with the physical bond, as it is called, of the mystical body, under which one may live with no more consciousness of it than a child has of its circulatory system. The higher bond of Christ-life is the *moral* bond, the union of the individual heart and will with those of Christ, the identification of purpose, of means, of effort. The Christian, conscious now of his wonderful super-life with Christ, and conscious, too, that this super-life is paralyzed by sin, must be made conscious that it is increased, deepened unto ever-closer identification by *moral* action according to the mind of Christ. To this Christian St. Peter speaks as of old: "Knowing these things before, take heed . . . *grow in grace*, and in the knowledge

of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii, 17-18). Therefore, the full truth of the mystical body is only reached when the incorporated member resolves to "let that mind be in (him) which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii, 5), since then only will he "attain to the full knowledge of the Son of God, to the perfect man, to the full measure of the stature of Christ" (Ephes. vi, 13).

None less is the dignity of being a Christian, and nothing less is the mystical body, God's "dispensation to be realized in the fulness of time—to bring all things to a head in Christ" (Ephes. i, 10).

III

What is the connection between the doctrine of the mystical body and the so-called liturgical movement? Writers on the origin of this movement quite unanimously ascribe the middle decades of the last century as the period of its inception. Thus writes Henri Leclercq:²⁷

The liturgical movement, which came to light in the second half of the nineteenth century, is a reaction against this decadence of worship. . . . It opposes the traditional prayer of the Church to the innumerable particular devotions which developed outside of the traditional lines . . . and opposes its magnificent unity to the disparate multitude of modern devotions.

Now in the middle decades of the nineteenth-century England was being swept by the origins of ritualism, which, as defined by one of its champions, was "a sober and chastened regard for the outward accessories of worship."²⁸ In the Germanies there had long raged the scourge of Josephinism, one objective of which was a vernacular German liturgy. In France the backwashes of Gallicanism had all but caused the disappearance of the Roman liturgy in favor of modern eclectic, diocesan liturgies. This was the age of Abbot Prosper Guéranger, father of modern Benedictinism in France and Germany, whose life work was to reintroduce the Roman liturgy into France.²⁹ The liturgical movement in its origins was little more than a desperate effort to save the liturgy for its own sake, and this was to be effected largely by emphasizing its wondrous and manifold elements of beauty. It is exaggeration to say that this was an esthetic movement: it is not exaggeration, I believe, to say this

incipient liturgical movement was a ritualistic movement almost exclusively.

Little more than a hot-house plant of ritualism, the liturgical movement, remained until the clarion call of Pius X "to bring all things to a head in Christ" disclosed once more the "unsearchable riches" of the mystical body. Then and then only the real function of the liturgy could be generally understood and seen as the mystical body in action—the common worship of regenerated humanity, living, adoring, sacrificing, suffering with Christ through Christ and in Christ to the glory of the Trinity! Let us consider how this is so.

IV

Before the liturgical movement can mean more than surface ritualism several cultural notions, now relegated to the background of our religious consciousness in the press of modern life, must be revived, studied, preached, lived. They are in order:

- A. The concept of Christian worship in general.
- B. The concept of Christian sacrificial worship in particular.
- C. The notion of the general priesthood of the Faithful.
- D. The Sacraments as channels of Christ-life.

Worship is the recognition of the Divine Goodness and of man's consequent debt of gratitude, love, service. Says Father de la Taille:³⁰

The first duty of man is the surrender of himself to the divine goodness, which is worthy of all love. The whole moral law derives from this obligation, which itself is not based on any other. . . . Why must we love God? . . . From His being the sovereign good, to whom all love is due . . . God is goodness, goodness is lovable. God by His single self is all goodness, and outside of Him there is nothing good, nothing lovable, except in relation to Him. . . . Before all else, therefore, man owes himself to God. He owes to Him the return of whatever he has received from Him. To the God who gave him all, he gives himself whole and entire. And that he may be acceptable to God, man prays. . . . *Latria*, eucharist, impetration (adoration, thanksgiving, petition) go side by side and hand in hand in this first approach of man towards God.

Such is worship in general, the worship of a devout pagan, the worship of a devout Jew. The specifically Christian element is not yet present. That any worship be wholly

worthy of God's Majesty, God's Sanctity, God's Love, it must be offered at the hands of one who is by reason of his own excellence altogether pleasing and acceptable in the eyes of God. Now by reason of intrinsic excellence, there was but one being supereminently perfect in God's eyes—His only Son in human flesh. Therefore, unless the worship of regenerated humanity be in some measure *displeasing* to God, it must be caught up, linked with, associated with the only perfect worship of the Trinity, that of Christ. And that in the Providence of God is what happens, for "He is the head of the body, the Church. . . . For in Him it hath pleased (the Father) that all fulness should dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, alike the things on earth and the things in Heaven" (Col. i, 18-20). In this passage Paul deals with only one function of worship, reconciliation, but elsewhere it is amply clear that all the offices of our worship are ideally perfect because they are performed at the right hand of the Father by His Son, "the man, Jesus Christ" (I Tim. ii, 5).

The next idea that must be rescued from obscurity is that of a ritual sacrifice. As worship is man's first and highest duty, based upon love, so in the realm of worship, sacrifice is its expression *par excellence*. Sacrifice, is, therefore, when informed by love, the highest, noblest act of which created nature is capable. But what is a sacrifice? The word has so long been used in transferred meanings that its root meaning is all but lost among us. Sacrifice is the solemn, social act whereby in recognition of God's supreme claims over us, we render Him a gift, which stands for ourselves, which symbolizes the complete oblation of ourselves to Him. St. Augustine's classic definition is traditional among theologians: "The ritual sacrifice is the visible sign of the invisible sacrifice—*Sacrificium ergo visibile invisibilis sacrificii sacramentum, id est, sacrum signum est.*"³¹ This also for the pagan, this also for the devout Jew. The Catholic religion does not lack the crowning glory of sacrificial worship. Indeed, it is a truth of Catholic Faith that under the New Law, the Christian sacrifice, holy Mass, is the consummation and perfection of all sacrifices.³² But how many, even of devoutest Catholics, envisage the Mass as the rendering to God of symbolic gifts, bread and wine, as tokens of their own personal and social oblation to

the Godhead, to be united with, associated to the one timeless oblation wherein "Christ hath loved you and delivered himself up for (you) an offering and sacrifice of sweet savour to God" (Ephes. v, 2)?

It is a long time since Catholics, generally, have heard preachers echo the words of St. Peter to them: "As living stones, be ye built up into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices . . . ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood" (I Pet. ii, 5-9). Since Reformation days, when this truth was wrested out of its setting by the heretics and compounded with falsity, Catholics have not dwelt upon the Christian priesthood *as something shared in by all baptized persons*. How many baptized and confirmed persons would not be vastly surprised—even more vastly thrilled—to know that they share with the clergy in the only priesthood that counts, that of Christ? The priest, the *pontifex*, is the bridge-builder, the mediator, the link between God and man. Only Christ can bridge the gap between God and man: "For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus" (I Tim. ii, 5-6). The Christians of antiquity conceived the priesthood strictly in terms of Christ's mediation: "Since, then, we have a great High Priest, who hath passed through the Heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we confess" (Heb. iv, 14).

It is the words of the present great *Pontifex Maximus*, Pius XI, that the Catholic laity is now forcibly reminded that it is in a very real and literal sense fellow sharer in the priesthood of Christ. He addresses the faithful in *Miserentissimus Redemptor*.³⁴

The Apostle admonished us . . . having become partakers of His holy and eternal priesthood, we should offer up "gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v, 1). For not only are they partakers in the mystery of this priesthood and in the duty of offering sacrifices and satisfaction to God, who have been appointed by Jesus Christ the High Priest as the ministers of such sacrifices . . . but also those Christians called, and rightly so, by the Prince of the Apostles "a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood" (I Pet. ii, 9), and who are called to offer "sacrifices for sin" (Heb. v, 1) not only for themselves but for all mankind, and this in much the same way as every priest.

Thus it is time once more to explain to the Faithful with St. Thomas and all pre-Reformation teachers that the

"seals" imprinted on the soul at Baptism and Confirmation are graduated initiations into the sacred priesthood of Christ. The Angelic Doctor has it:³⁵

Each of the faithful is deputed to receive, or to bestow on others, things pertaining to the worship of God. And this, properly speaking, is the purpose of the sacramental character. Now the whole rite of the Christian religion is derived from Christ's priesthood. Consequently, it is clear that the sacramental character is specially the character (seal) of Christ, to whose character the faithful are likened by reason of their sacramental characters, *which are nothing else than certain participations of Christ's priesthood, flowing from Christ Himself.*

To sum up: To put the Christian once more in possession of these concepts, that he is in the Church worshipping God in spirit and truth, as a co-sharer in Christ's priesthood, as co-victim in Christ's sacrifice, was what Pius X meant when he said to laymen: "You must not *pray* at Mass, you must *say* Mass."³⁶ That alone is the interpretation to be given his words in the famous—but ill-observed—*motu proprio* on church music about the active participation of the laity in the prayers and offices of the Church as the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit. "It is most necessary," echoes the present Vicar of Christ, "that the Faithful, *not as outsiders or as mute spectators*, but as understanding truly, and as penetrated by, the beauty of the liturgy, should so assist at the sacred functions . . . that their voices alternate with those of the priest and the choir."³⁷ Anything less than this means depriving the Christian of what is his by reason of his participation in the priesthood of Christ.

What is the bond that links together all the members of Christ's mystical body? It is usually called grace, a name which suggests so little of its meaning. It is sometimes called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a far more expressive term. It is called nowadays Christlife, the constant flow of the vitality and fruitfulness of the Vine into the branches. The supernatural vitality, the participation of the life-forces of Christ, is that life which Christ came that we might have and have most abundantly (St. John x, 10). And it is ours at every contact with the supernatural order, but preeminently ours in the marvelous system of the Sacraments, so many channels to bring this life into every mo-

ment and exigency of our lives. By Baptism we are engrafted into Christ, regenerated in the supernatural order. When the Christlife now pulsing through us becomes endangered at adolescence it is confirmed with the seal of the Spirit, who in a special manner takes up His abode within the heart. If serious sin should have made the normal flow of Christlife, this is restored by the Sacrament of Penance. For the special crisis of serious sickness, when the reception of Penance might be impossible, the same effect is made possible by the last anointing. There is extant a beautiful sermon of St. Augustine's in which he praised his flock of Hippo because they called the Eucharist by only one name, *Life*.³⁸ "Life," indeed, it is above all else, the food, the sustenance of the soul, immediate contact with the Truth, the Life, in whom dwells the Godhead corporally (Col. ii, 9). Rounding out the social exigencies of the sacramental system, there is Orders for spiritually propagating this Christ-life, and Matrimony for propagating this Christ-life in the flesh for begetting children for their place in the mystical body. The sacramental system is thus seen to be an adequately planned and complete provision for maintaining this Christ-life from the cradle to the grave. Beyond the Sacraments, lie the manifold sacramentals, by the Midas-touch of which everything about us may become an agency for sanctification until "we attain . . . to the perfect man, to the full measure of the stature of Christ" (Ephes. iv, 13).

The liturgy, rightly conceived, is thus found to be no more and no less than the mystical body in operation. On the side of moral values the liturgical movement seeks no more and no less than to make every Christian conscious of his or her part and partnership in Christ, conscious, too, that his little personal effort is really Christ-work: that Christ conquers and is glorified in him when he remains loyal, that Christ fails and is betrayed in him when he is recreant. On the side of external worship, the liturgical movement seeks to make every Christian conscious of a personal share in the true priesthood of Christ, and of a consequent public function in the world-wide, heaven-wide worship of God through the same Christ. This worship of God, always and everywhere linked with the infinitely perfect worship of God at the hands of Christ, *must be as perfect as we can make it. Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quo-*

cumque defectu. No matter how insignificant of itself, nothing is insignificant when brought into the ensemble of Divine worship. While the liturgical movement does not aim at restoring old forms of ceremonial, and cares naught for any form of architecture or style of church furnishings *for their own sakes*, it would be false to conclude that these are matters of indifference. The movement is vitally concerned that everything connected with worship be true to the two thousand years of Catholic traditions,³⁹ and true to the "sacred symbolism of design, genuinity of fabric, and adaptation to purpose."

V

When the genial Pilgrim of *America* last year wrote the lines that follow he was seeing in part and prophesying in part:⁴⁰

With the growth of appreciation of traditional forms of piety—the spirit and text of the liturgy, the cycle of the Church's calendar, the traditional forms of worship in sound and fabric, which have come down to us through the ages—it is my belief that the supreme authority of the Church will become more and more preoccupied with such correlation (between expressions of modern devotion and traditional liturgical piety) and will welcome the suggestions of historians and theologians thereto.

He had observed how without let or hindrance from the Holy See a number of somewhat divergent liturgical movements had overspread Europe from national centers here and there. Belgium and France and Holland were profoundly influenced by the work of such men as Bauduin, Lefebvre, Capelle, Callewaert and Croegaert; Germany had responded to the corresponding efforts of Abbot Ildephonse Herwegen of Maria Laach, of Guardini, Stephan, and Kramp; Pius Parsh of Klosterneuburg near Vienna had set on foot popularization programs that had swept Austria and Switzerland; Spain, Catalonia in particular, had heard the same call issuing from the ages-old Abbey of Montserrat; and largely in consequence of Cardinal Schuster's initiative, Italy was brought within the scope of the new spirit. That Rome's pastoral watchfulness should most closely follow the trends of those events is part of the commission of Peter. That Rome, save for a gentle work of guidance here and there, should allow these several liturgical movements to

develop spontaneously is in keeping with the traditional spirit of the Holy See. That the enthusiasm of new ideas would here or there lead to minor local extravagances was quite to be expected. And since the incipient liturgical movement in the United States is fed from these divergent cultural influences from abroad, the danger is not past that it might here or there for a time undergo a somewhat unbalanced growth. I shall, therefore, allow myself to indicate the dangers that in my opinion must be guarded against in this matter, until such time as the Holy See takes the matter closer in hand.

The hurry and restlessness of American life have made us notoriously superficial. Superficiality in this matter would lead to an over-emphasis on ceremonial externals, without ever penetrating to the doctrinal basis and real value of the movement. And yet if these spiritual and vital truths are not clearly taught the people as the goal of the whole movement, by what norms will they be able to distinguish between a crank's artistic concern for "Gothic" vestments, linen albs, Gregorian plainsong, and this halting attempt to bring the externals of their own worship into accord with truth, tradition and ecclesiastical prescription? In opening the movement to the people, we must go the full way and allow them to glimpse the glorious dogma involved.

Again, the movement, as far as it effects the people at large, must be kept absolutely free from archeological fads, the attempt to turn back history and revive usages natural to past ages, but quite foreign to our modern mind and civilization. What I have in mind is such a thing (it has been tried) as the unauthorized revival of such ceremonial oddities as contributing natural offerings, fruit, wine, oil, and so forth, in place of the customary money offerings at holy Mass. I trust no one will read into my purposely chosen harsh explanation, "archeological fads" any slightest condemnation of the laudable efforts everywhere in evidence around us to restore in all possible perfection the traditional setting for our worship of God. Indeed, one of the most heartening incidents since the coming of the liturgical movement to America was the founding of the Liturgical Arts Society with its exemplary quarterly, *Liturgical Arts*. In a country as large as the United States, where cultural ante-

cedents and present levels are so varied, to substitute true, objective norms for personal taste as the criteria of excellence is a tremendous task. No one instrument, we dare to say, will do more towards accomplishing it than *Liturgical Arts*.

Another pitfall would be the position that the official liturgical prayers should be taken as the "exclusive pattern of devotional practice in common." Against this no less a promoter of the movement than Father Romano Guardini, Professor at the University of Berlin, says:⁴¹

To do so would be to confess complete ignorance of the spiritual requirements of the greater part of the Faithful. The forms of popular piety should rather continue to exist side by side with those of the liturgy. . . . There could be no greater mistake than that of discarding the valuable elements in the spiritual life of the people for the sake of the liturgy, or than the desire of assimilating them to it.

A last mistake that would be very disastrous would be decrying in any least degree our many modern forms of non-sacrificial Eucharistic worship, such as Benediction, perpetual adoration, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Hour and the like, provided these be carried out with due regard to their own rubrical prescriptions. Holy Hour and each of the practices named, have their own place and time and rubrical prescriptions as safeguards against eccentricity. When one meets a situation in which one of these forms of Eucharistic devotion is being practised in a manner not consonant with the true doctrine of the Eucharist, it will also be found to be in violation to its own rubrical prescriptions. The incomparable superiority and unique character of sacrificial worship preaches itself when the concept of a ritual sacrifice is once driven home, and there is room withal for these other forms of Eucharistic piety in the crown of liturgical worship.

VI

The liturgical movement challenges America. To the extent to which it wins acceptance, our zealous pastors and teachers, whether in the colleges or universities or in the myriad parochial schools, have in their hands the one most perfect instrument for presenting the twentieth-century appeal of Christ. The unwearying endeavors of the Holy See

to bring all things under the headship of Christ the King, and thereby to enflame the laity with zeal for Catholic Action—the cause of Christ—will best and quickest be achieved by showing every man that he or she is a living part of the mystic Christ. *Solutio totius difficultatis Christus* said Tertullian and the modern man must learn fully what Tertullian the Montanist only partially learned from the Apostle of the Gentiles, “with me to live is Christ” (Phil. ii, 5).

1J. Lebreton, S.J., *Les Origines du Dogme de la Trinité* (Paris: Beauchesne, 6th ed., 1910).

2F. Prat, S.J., *Le Théologie de S. Paul* (Paris: Beauchesne, I, 18th ed., 1930; II, 16th ed., 1929); Eng. tr. by J. L. Stoddard, *The Theology of St. Paul* (New York: Benziger).

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Deadly White Paper

REVEREND DANIEL A. LORD, S.J.

Reprinted from the Service Sheet of the Scriveners' and Catholic Student Writers' Guild, The Queen's Work Press (St. Louis).

THE average amateur writer comes to his task of writing in somewhat the following fashion:

In the exact center of a desk or table he places a sheet of clean white paper. (If he feels very professional, the paper is journalistic yellow.) Near the paper he places several perfectly sharpened pencils. He gets the light right, over his shoulder from the window, or directly on the paper from his lamp. Then he settles himself down to write. . . .

And nothing happens.

He breaks the point of a pencil. He draws figures on the paper (if very expert), he does a series of profiles down the side of the sheet, he fiddles with any object on the desk (paperweight, paper cutter), he picks up and throws down a magazine or book, writes a sentence, crosses it out,

starts a fresh sheet, and at the end of two hours has a wastebasket full of papers, some with one crossed-out sentence, some with nothing but a title, and in his heart a despair of writing.

Terrible, and absolutely unnecessary.

There are any number of things that our amateur writer failed to do before he got out that sheet of clean paper. He forgot them all, and because he had failed in his *approaches to writing*, writing had seemed difficult and his hours had been wasted.

Most good pieces of writing are largely completed before even the writer touches pencil to paper. The remark of the famous French dramatist contains the essence of truth. He threw down on the table before his friend two small sheets of paper. "There is my play," he said. "On two sheets of paper?" asked his astonished friend. "Yes," the author replied; "It's all done except the dialogue." His whole play was really done before he had started to put down the words that carried the drama onto the stage.

TALK IT FIRST

It is most important to remember that written and spoken language are not essentially different. Many young or amateur writers seem to think that when they sit down to write they must change entirely their ordinary method of expression. They even start to use *whilst* instead of *while*.

The best style is merely elevated conversation, for writing is only man's effort to reach with his thought persons outside the range of his voice. The real test of a literary style is: How easily and well does it "read aloud"? If it flows smoothly, sounds naturally, is compelling and easy to follow when read aloud, it is basically a good style.

So before one begins to write on any subject, the best thing one can possibly do is talk it out. And talk it out at some length.

1. *With a good friend.* Nothing in the world stimulates thought like conversation with a friend. Don't take the poor chap out and say, "I've been thinking of writing on the fact that hot-dog stands are ruining the country's digestion,

and I want to talk it over with you." But when you are with him, bring up the subject of hot-dog stands, thrash it out with him, express yourself naturally and easily, get the stimulating effect of his opposition, and then admit that you intended to write. If he is a really true friend, he will be interested. If he isn't you may have material for an article, but you may have lost your friend.

2. *With a group interested in writing.* Catholic authors in general have not the clannish spirit that is important among non-Catholic authors. In the center of the restaurant in a certain famous New York hotel is a round table, known throughout literary America. About it gather a group of writers who have really formed something of a new school. They eat together, talk literature together, exchange ideas, and stimulate one another in most surprising and delightful fashion. Amateur writers would be wise to "gang" together. Get yourself a group of friends and talk writing with them. If they are all writers, they will let you talk out your subjects with them, because they will want to talk theirs out with you. They will even let you read your short story or poem to them, because when you finish they will not merely have the opportunity of telling you what they think of it, but you will be in their debt to such an extent that you have to listen to what they have written. Mutual cooperation between groups of writers is invaluable.

3. *With yourself.* Even at the risk of being thought slightly mad, talk your subject over with yourself. Go out for a walk, and talk out your ideas. Try phrasing them with your tongue. Walk about your room and talk out your subject. Stand in front of a mirror and tell yourself what you think of this or that; thrash out the subject until even the image in the mirror is impressed and interested. Then you will sit down and write easily.

4. *With an imaginary character.* Many writers invent a perfect series of fictional characters toward whom they direct their writings. On the opposite side of their desk or table, they seat a definite person. He is someone who has the bad taste to disagree with them on the subject they intend to write about. He is an interested fellow in whom they can tell their yarn. He is a thick-headed dolt of a

stubborn mule who must be convinced even against his will. But he is always definite of such an age, such likes and dislikes, such prejudices, and such fixed attitudes toward the subject the author means to discuss. The author then proceeds to interest, enthrall, convince, or bulldoze this imaginary character (changed if need be for every occasion), and writing becomes relatively easy.

5. *With someone who exists but isn't present.* Lovers write easily because they see before them their beloved and they talk out of full hearts. Controversialists write easily because they see across from them an adversary who must be whipped into submission. So young or amateur authors will do well to talk things over with a non-present but real person; someone who likes their "stuff" and feels as they do; an author with whom they thoroughly disagree; some adversary (perhaps not actually known) who must be convinced.

If before a person puts pen to paper, he has talked out his subject, the actual writing becomes simple. The recipe is one that I from experience can assure you is eminently sane and successful. Don't let that desperate and frightening piece of blank paper get between you and your successful writing.